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Unpacking community participation in research: a systematic literature review of community-based and participatory research in Alaska

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Abstract

Although concepts of community and participation have been heavily critiqued in the social sciences, they remain uncritically applied across disciplines, leading to problems that undermine both research and practice. Nevertheless, these approaches are advocated for, especially in Indigenous contexts. This article aims to address this by conducting a systematic literature review of community-based and participatory research in Alaska, USA, where social change has been rapid, having ramifications for social organisation, and where participatory and community-based approaches are heavily advocated for by Alaska Native organisations. Conceptualisations of community and participation were extracted and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The majority of articles showed a lack of critical consideration around both community and participation, although this was especially the case in reporting around community. Whilst this could lead to issues of local elite co-opting research, an alternative interpretation is that Western sociological literature surrounding community is not transferable to Indigenous contexts.

Keywords: Alaska, community, participation, research politics, collaboration, systematic literature review, inequality, Indigeneity, sociology

1.0 Introduction

Community-based and participatory approaches, which claim to empower marginalised peoples, have increased in popularity across various disciplines, including medicine, psychology, and environmental science (Israel *et al.,* 2017; Le *et al.,* 2011; Minkler *et al.,* 2006; Wallerstein and Duran, 2010). However, community and participation are heavily contested and critiqued within the social sciences (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Barrett, 2015), which is not always recognised across all disciplines using these concepts (Titz *et al.,* 2018). For example, the idea that a community is a homogenous, benign, and identifiable entity is contested, as there are always internal power structures operating within groups of peoples (Brint, 2001). Meanwhile, participation in research has been critiqued as a means of increasing control over marginalised peoples under the guise of empowerment (Guta *et al.,* 2013). As community-based and participatory approaches are concerned with action and social change (Wallerstein and Duran, 2006) the risks of uncritical notions of community and participation have the potential to reproduce underlying inequalities (Titz *et al.,* 2018).

To assess the usage of participation and community, we use Alaska, USA, as a case study. Here there is a substantial Indigenous population, and community-based and participatory approaches are frequently promoted as the most appropriate (Balestrery, 2011). Rapid socio-political changes, some of which resulted from the Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act (ANSCA) have altered social organisation with ramifications for how community and participation looks in Alaska (Ganapathy, 2011). This, combined with the way that community-based and participatory approaches (when used together) involve community members and emphasise action emerging from research, render community-based and participatory research susceptible to being co-opted by more dominant groups within a community.

This paper conducts a systematic literature review of participatory and community-based research in Alaska to examine how these are used. Of particular interest are definitions of community, considerations of who is included (and excluded), consistency of participation of participants, and the

nature of participation. These are discussed within the context of the history of research in Alaska, and in relation to contemporary debates in social science more broadly.

2.0 Conceptualising community participation

In this section we outline the foundations of community participation, which provide the basis for our systematic literature review. We start by examining the shift from extractive, colonising research practice towards more participatory approaches that aim to break down power structures between the researcher and the researched. We discuss this in the context of communities, participation and micro-politics of research, before focusing specifically on the Alaskan context.

2.1 From extractive to emancipatory research

It is broadly recognised that the historical intersection of knowledge, research and Imperialism 'othered' Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge (McMillan and Yellowhorn, 2004; Smith, 1994). Despite this acknowledgement, contemporary research practice has continued to be harmful to Indigenous peoples, creating a (valid) distrust of researchers (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Ford *et al.,* 2016; Glass and Kaufert, 2007). Emancipatory approaches, aligned with critical theory, constructivist-interpretivism, and feminism, recognise the political nature of research (Sommerville and Perkins, 2003). They emphasise the subjective and partial nature of knowledge through interrogating power relations between the researcher and the researched (Kral, 2014), whilst also recognising that the production of knowledge is implicit in the reproduction of power dynamics (DeLyser and Karolczyk, 2010; Rose, 1997). For example, it is recognised that research is rooted in colonial and relational power structures (Louis, 2007; Smith, 2013), requiring consideration of positionality and reflexivity to reveal biases and assumptions in individual, institutional, and geopolitical terms (Nagar and Ali, 2003). In the context of colonised peoples, particularly Indigenous peoples such as in Alaska, an additional necessity is the deconstruction of history and subsequent

application of ideologies and social theory, as theories developed in Western contexts are not necessarily transferable to other contexts (Abolson and Willett, 2004; hooks, 1992).

Such emancipatory approaches have led to a participatory turn in research (Chambers, 1994; Fuller and Kitchin, 2004), whereby power is transferred through the research process through participation at each stage of the research and resultant social action (Louis, 2007). For example, involvement of the researched group in research development ensures that the researcher's (often Western) worldview does not dominate the research focus (Atleo, 2004). Similarly, in analysis and evaluation of research, involvement of the researched group allows for their interpretations to be included, potentially to the point that studies are re-orientated based on different worldviews (Anderson *et al.,* 2012). It is this component of participation that is promoted as fundamentally transferring power to the researched and facilitates the breaking down of colonial institutional structures while preventing misinterpretation of local realities (Castleden *et al.,* 2008).

Participatory research needs to be clear and transparent about who participated, and in what way (Castleden *et al.,* 2012). For instance, during project planning and development, who is consulted can define project direction. Notwithstanding that deciding who is included and who is excluded involves making a judgement about whose values matter (Estrella and Gaventa, 1997), researchers have a tendency to consult local leaders, who can recommend people based on various considerations, including political ones (Widdowson and Howard, 2008). Thus, as well as careful consideration of who to include and who to exclude, it is also important to reflect on these decisions. Moreover, participatory research is subject to critiques that fundamentally undermine its goal to empower marginalised peoples. From a practical standpoint its increased usage across disciplines leads to uncritical and tokenistic research, with participation as a box-ticking exercise (Dodman and Mitlin, 2013; Ford *et al.,* 2016; 2018; Wilson *et al.,* 2018). Additionally, despite the social justice orientation of these approaches, the growing acceptance of participatory approaches may have more to do with accessing marginalised populations and obtaining better quality data, rather than empowerment (e.g. Leung *et al.,* 2004).

From a postcolonial perspective, Willow (2015) critiques that participating in mainstream processes, within Western institutional structures, does not lead to empowerment on Indigenous terms, but within asymmetrical colonial systems. This mirrors Nadasdy (2003), who comments that as a pre-requisite to participation, Indigenous peoples need to agree to engage in these structures (and their rules) to become empowered. Contributing to Western (dominant) systems also creates a tension as contributions perpetuate discourses and rules around the production of knowledge without addressing deep-rooted inequalities and legitimate desires for difference (Willow, 2015). Moreover, when applied in practice, these can become means of increasing control of peoples (Gombay, 2014; McNeeley, 2012; Nielsen and Meilby, 2013; Egan and Place, 2012). Thus, building on Foucault (1988; 2003; 2010), participatory research can promote forms of governance that increase control and management of the most marginalised (Buggy and McNamara, 2016; Guta *et al.,* 2013; Miller and Rose, 2008). In a First Nations context, Cargo *et al.,* (2008), hypothesise that the democratic and equal participation ideals of participatory research conflict with self-determination in some Indigenous groups, where community direction and control are desired, but undermined through notions of participation.

2.2 Micropolitics of collaboration

Participatory research inevitably requires extensive collaboration with various actors such as steering committees, co-researchers and community-based organisations. Here we discuss the importance of considering the micropolitics of collaboration, which have ethical ramifications and influence data quality. For example, co-researchers, who are members of the researched group who work with researchers to conduct parts of the research (Guta *et al.,* 2013), are frequently used in participatory research. Whilst this increases co-researcher control of the research (Louis, 2007), it is important to consider the co-researcher's positionality, and how this changes through their role (Greene *et al.,* 2009). For example, placing responsibility on the co-researcher to move between researchers and the researched group can result in tokenism and inauthentic participation (Guta *et al.,* 2013), whilst also

placing the co-researcher in a vulnerable position (McCartan *et al.,* 2012). Smith (2013) further critiques the assumption that co-researchers can speak on behalf of their community, as their lived experience can invalidate the lived experience of others. Similar arguments can be extended to steering committees and collaborators (Buggy and McNamara, 2015). Jewkes and Murcott (1998) also found that the same types of people ('volunteer sector elites') can dominate steering committees. This is not to suggest that collaborations are inherently flawed, but rather that the power relations within them need to be acknowledged so as not to exacerbate inequalities (Buggy and McNamara, 2015; Peterson, 2010).

2.3 Community

Communities are often the level at which participatory approaches are used. However, communities are not homogenous entities but host to internal power dynamics, interests, and divisions (Brint, 2001), which can result in social stratification and marginalisation (BurnSilver and Magdanz, 2019; Gujit and Shah, 2009). Even where there is apparent community consensus, as early as 1961, Coleman showed that consensus-generation within a community largely reflects the views of dominant groups, whilst Rieder (1988) shows how such consensus could be a means of resistance to subordinate groups that threaten dominance of the elite. Therefore, by working within existing power structures, outsiders may (unknowingly) reproduce underlying inequalities (Lynam *et al.,* 2007; Platteau 2004).

Whilst the above arguments are well-documented in sociology, anthropology, human geography, and development studies, applied research (e.g. climate change, tourism, resource management, and public health) can fall into the pitfall of adopting the term uncritically, resulting in a number of opponents to the concept (e.g. Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; De Beer, 2013; Scheyvens, 2002; Titz *et al.,* 2018). For instance, Smith (1996: 250) states that, *"of all the words in sociological discourse, community is the one that has most obviously come from wonderland, in that it can mean whatever you want".* Some authors (e.g. Buggy and McNamara, 2016; Burckett, 2001; Christens and Speer,

2006; Lane and McDonald, 2005; Westoby and Dowling, 2013) further argue that community is often used in place of a geographical entity, divorcing it from its socio-political context, including symbolic importance (Cohen, 2013). Kobayashi and de Leeuw (2010) and Mawani (2009) suggest that Indigenous peoples are incorrectly understood as a homogenous group, often only in relation to non-Indigenous researchers. More recently, Barrett (2015) argues that considering the impact of exogenous forces (e.g. colonialism, globalisation and neoliberalism), is just as important as considering community cohesivity. For example, they highlight that the rise of private interests, such as wealth, leads to exclusionary practices within communities.

Given community complexity, it is important to consider who is excluded and who is included in community-based research (Eversole, 2003; Martin 2012). For example, as community-based projects seek to shift power to communities, having them take ownership of the project can lead to elite capture, whereby local elites reinforce vested interests to benefit those already most powerful (Adhikari and Goldey, 2009; Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Titz *et al.,* 2018; Wong, 2010). Therefore, despite the goal of local ownership of projects, uncritical notions of community can increase inequality (Buggy and McNamara, 2016). Similarly, focusing on certain groups to understand an issue can privilege particular voices and discourses (e.g. BurnSilver and Magdanz, 2019; BurnSilver *et al.,* 2016; Hitomi and Loring, 2018).

Looking towards so-called communities to improve all manner of issues can be viewed as misleading and naïve, as outcomes of participation and increased social bonds are exaggerated, particularly where deep-rooted inequalities and structures are part of the problem (Cass and Brennan, 2002; Mowbray, 2004; Inaba, 2013; Wiseman, 2006). Thus, focusing on communities can place undue responsibility on local actors to address structural issues beyond their power, such as poor governance (Gaillard and Mercer, 2013; Lavell, 1994).

Despite differences between community-based and participatory approaches to research, these terms are frequently used synonymously (Washington, 2004). However, this can exacerbate inequalities if

the critiques of community are not considered. For example, Israel *et al.,* (2017:32) identify recognising the "community as a unit of identity" as a key principle of community-based participatory research (CBPR) and, although they highlight positive attributes of community, they do not consider internal power structures. Furthermore, they highlight that CBPR seeks to strengthen a sense of community through collective engagement (Israel *et al.,* 2005), which can be problematic given that apparent cohesiveness within communities can reflect the interests of dominant groups, or are a means of excluding subordinate groups (Brint, 2001; Coleman, 1961; Jewkes and Murcott, 1998; Rieder, 1988). Therefore, there is evidence that in research that is both community-based and participatory there is often a lack of engagement with critical notions of community, and potential for elite capture.

2.4 Alaska

Alaska is the most northern and sparsely populated US state, with a population of 731, 000 (State of Alaska, 2019), of which 15% are Alaska Native (AN) or American Indian (AI) (State of Alaska, 2018). There are overall large disparities in health, education, and other social indicators, owing to historical and contemporary marginalisation of AN peoples. For example, forced removal of children to residential schools disrupted traditional education and family ties, which is evident today as intergenerational trauma (Thurman *et al.,* 2004). Thus, research with AN occurs in the context of *"violent dispossession of property, homeland, culture, language and religion"* (Caldwell *et al.,* 2005; 4). Therefore, the Alaska Federation for Natives and the Alaska Native Science Commission have developed guidelines which highlight the need for inclusion of Alaska Native co-researchers and for decision-making to be based on consensus (Balestrery, 2011). Reflecting this, participatory approaches have become important in research with AN peoples (Cochran *et al.,* 2008; Rasmus, 2014).

Whilst AN society was once stratified based on social and cultural factors, rapid political changes have impacted social relations within AN communities, shifting towards what some scholars have

referred to as capitalist class stratification (Mason, 2002). Whilst this has had a range of consequences throughout Alaska, (see Ganapathy, 2011; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009), it has also changed family relations, leadership and decision-making, which has increased inequalities within communities (Kuokkanen, 2011; Shearer, 2012). For example, some literature has documented how a small minority of AN in each village become wealthy corporate representatives, who prioritise economic development over other concerns (Altamirano-Jimenez, 2007; Fontaine, 2002; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009). This rapid transformation from collective to private interests could result in more exclusionary tendencies in AN communities, as suggested by Barrett (2015). This, combined with the way that community-based and participatory approaches (when used together) involve community members and emphasise action emerging from research, render community-based and participatory research susceptible to being co-opted by more dominant groups within a community. This is not only because of the aforementioned challenges in deciphering community consensus, but also because dominant groups are more likely to be more able to engage in research, whilst marginalised groups can be excluded leading to harmful consequences (Marston *et al.,* 2016).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Approach

A systematic literature review of community-based and participatory research in Alaska was conducted to assess the operationalisation of these approaches in light of aforementioned critiques. The work builds upon a growing literature examining participatory research in similar contexts (David-Chavez and Gavin, 2018; Flynn *et al.,* 2017; Hitomi and Loring, 2018), with the difference here being our explicit focus evaluating the concept of community. The review was limited to research in Alaska to ensure that the social and political context around research politics and regulation were kept consistent across all studies.

We use procedures identified in Berrang-Ford *et al.,* (2015) to identify relevant peer reviewed literature, with searches conducted in ISI web of knowledge, Jstor, Scopus, PubMED, ASSIA and Google Scholar. Synonyms for "participatory" and "community-based" were used to account for differences in disciplinary language (see supplementary materials), and test searches were conducted to experiment with lexicon. This was aided by consultation with an academic librarian as well as by reading regionally specific documents (supported by Pearce *et al.,* 2009). Identifying search terms was an iterative process, with terms added throughout the process, before concluding the identification phase of the systematic literature review. Nevertheless, it is likely that there are studies that have used these approaches, yet do not explicitly state this, even when accounting for different disciplinary languages. Thus, it is unlikely that we have captured all relevant articles. The review did not focus on AN, as this would introduce bias into how community was defined, although we expected that the majority of our sample would consist of articles working with AN peoples. For a full search matrix, see supplementary materials. A two-stage screening process aided in removing articles not relevant, beginning with screening of titles and abstracts with reference to inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1). The final procedure is demonstrated by Fig. 1.

Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic literature review. Given that the mode of research that we were interested in assessing is relatively new, we decided not to limit the searches by date so as to track trends of usage over time (see supplementary materials for more information). Note that to be included, all of the inclusion criteria has been met.

Inclusion criteria	***Exclusion criteria***
In English	Not in English
'Participatory' or similar	Not 'participatory' or similar
'Community-based'	Not 'community-based' or similar
Study conducted about Alaska only	Study conducted outside of Alaska
	Study is a comparison of Alaska and a place outside of Alaska

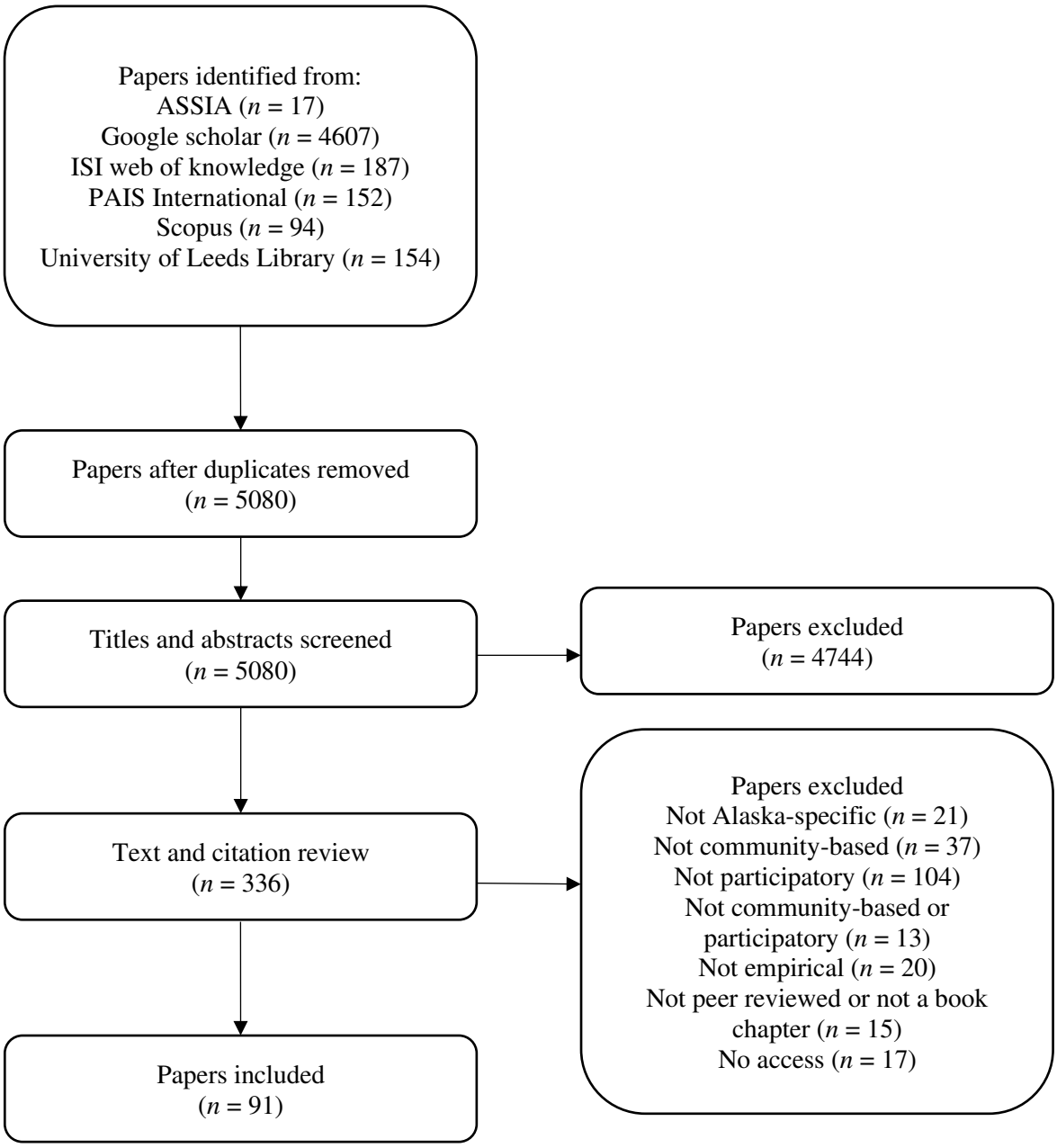


Fig. 1: Article identification process.

305 **3.2 Analysis**

306

307 A survey was created to systematically extract qualitative findings (Flynn *et al.,* 2017). Whilst this
308 was based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)
309 framework (Moher *et al.,* 2015), modifications were made to make it specific to assessing community
310 and participation, as is recommended in reviews of qualitative research (Walsh and Downe, 2005).
311 The main components of this adapted framework are represented in Table 2. Results from the survey
312 were imported into Microsoft Excel to facilitate quantitative and qualitative analysis.

313 Table 2: Key components of the survey used to extract qualitative data from articles.

Theme	***Question***
Community	Is a definition of community provided (yes/no)?
	What is the definition of community?
	Critical consideration around the concept of community
	Critical consideration of participants
	Consideration of who was excluded
Consistency	Are the same participants engaged in each stage or are they different at each stage?
Participation	Who participated?
	Participation in design (yes/no)?
	How did participants participate in design?
	Participation in data collection (yes/no)?
	How did participants participate in data collection?
	Participation in analysis
	How did participants participate in analysis?
	Participation in evaluation
	How did participants participate in evaluation?
	Participation in results dissemination

	How did participants participate in results dissemination?
Challenges	Are challenges reported (yes/no)?
	Description of challenges

Content analysis was conducted to characterise how community and participation were operationalised (Haslam and McGarty, 2014). Responses to questions about community, participants, how participants engaged in the research, and challenges reported were coded, categorised and sorted into themes. Challenges reported were included to elucidate tensions between theory and practice in community and participation, similar to Gaziulusoy *et al.,* (2016). Such qualitative analysis is important as quantitative analysis alone is inappropriate for evaluating qualitative and participatory research as it decontextualizes it (Walsh and Downe, 2005).

3.2.1 Evaluation rubric

An evaluation rubric was created to assess the extent to which articles considered and incorporated the critical literature surrounding community and participation at each phase of the research, similar to Flynn *et al.,* (2017). We note here that all scoring is dependent on the information provided by the authors and does not account for situations in which, for instance, research participants may have told researchers that they want them to have greater involvement (unless specifically highlighted within the article).Table 3 demonstrates the ranges for each level.

Table 3: Classification for community, consistency of participation, nature of participation and overall scores.

	Very low	***Low***	***Medium low***	***Medium high***	***High***	***Very high***
Community	0-11	12-23	24-35	36-47	48-59	60-71
Consistency of participation	0-16	17-33	34-50	51-67	68-84	85-100

Nature of participation	0-7	8-15	16-23	24-31	25-32	33-48
Overall score	0-8	9-17	18-26	27-35	36-42	42-49

333

334 **3.2.2 Community**

335

336 To assess critical consideration of community, each article was scored based on whether it provided a
337 definition for community (0 = none, 1 = partial, 2 = yes), consideration of who was excluded (0 =
338 none, 1 = partial, 2 = yes), critical consideration of who was included (0 = none, 1 = partial, 2 = full)
339 level of description of participants (0 = none / community, 1 = reports demographic information
340 and/or uses terms such as 'experts' or 'consultants' 2 = reports *role* in community, 3 = reports role in
341 community and participant's interest in the research). The purpose of this section was not to assign
342 low scores to projects which could replicate unequal power structures (e.g. through only including
343 leaders), but to assess transparency which would allow readers to make their own inferences, as is
344 standard in qualitative research (Noble and Smith, 2015). Qualitative notes were also recorded to note
345 the definition of community (if provided) and the nature of critical consideration of the concept.

346

347 **3.2.3 Consistency of participants**

348

349 Drawing on work that contends that that maintaining the consistency of who participates can be
350 important (e.g. Israel *et al.,* 2010; Smajgl and Ward, 2015), articles were scored based on the
351 consistency of who was involved. Each article was assigned a value of 0-3 (0 = participants at each
352 stage were completely different; 1 = participants at each stage varied but a few were the same; 2 =
353 participants were mostly the same but some were different, and; 3 = participants at each stage where
354 exactly the same). To ensure that the level of participation was accounted for, the level of consistency
355 was multiplied by the number of phases that involved participants. This meant that if two studies both
356 showed a high consistency of participants, the one with higher participation was scored more highly.

Articles with participation in one or fewer of the research phases were disregarded from this phase of analysis.

3.2.4 Nature of participation

To assess nature of participation, David-Chavez and Gavin (2018)'s framework (fig. 2) was utilised and applied to each phase of the research as follows: 0- Contractual/no participation, 1- Consultative, 2 – Collaborative, 3-Collegial, 4-Indigenous. To aid in assigning codes at each stage, Naylor *et al.,* (2002) was used as a guide. Each article was subsequently assigned a score out of twenty (number of phases multiplied by the highest possible score for each phase).

Fig. 2: Nature of participation. Source: David-Chavez and Gavin (2018).

3.2.5 Overall score

To calculate the overall score for each article, each score was converted into a percentage. The average across community, consistency and nature of participation were calculated, with this being the final score. Where consistency of participation could not be calculated (due to participation in two

or fewer phases) the average between community and nature of participation was calculated only. The highest score was then divided by six to create six groups that characterised the criticality of community participation for each article.

4.0 Results

Ninety-one papers were retained for full analysis as meeting the inclusion criteria. The majority of these were categorised under health sciences and environmental sciences (39% and 32%, respectively). Others were in education (e.g. Leonard and Gilmore, 1999; Lipka, 1989) or in the sociology (e.g. Caringi *et al.,* 2013; Picou, 2000).

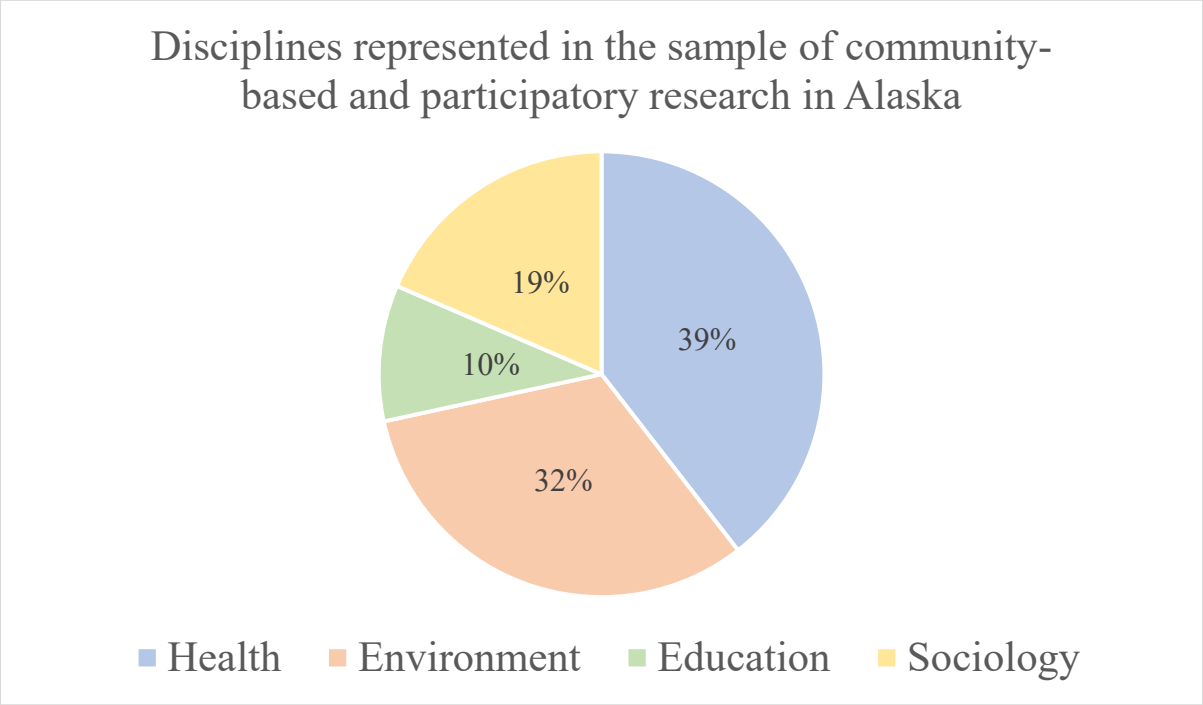


Figure 3: Disciplines represented in the sample of 91 articles.

38% (n=35) papers were categorised as 'low' with regards to their consideration for both community and participation. 9% (n=8) were categorised as very high, and 8% (n=7) were categorised as high (for full scoring, see supplementary information). As well as demonstrating high levels of participation throughout research, those that scored highly described who their participants were, how they came to be a part of the project, and the complexity of their positions within the community and the research. In terms of community, 88 of the 91 articles did not provide a definition. The remaining three provided partial definitions, for instance by recognising that, although AN students are diverse, their shared of experience of navigating two worlds provides some sense of community (Lopez *et al.,*

2012). 14 of the 91 articles critically considered who participants were and how they came to be involved in the research, whilst 77 did not. Critical consideration of participants was grouped into five themes: critique of demographic information, issues of representation, recognition of community heterogeneity, justification for inclusion of participant, and evidence of reflexivity. For examples of themes and corresponding articles, see supplementary materials. We additionally note that whilst we did not initially seek to specifically assess articles that looked at AN communities, all but one article (Brown and Donovan, 2013) focused on AN communities. One article (Natcher, 2004) considered who was excluded in the research, acknowledging that through including hunters they "failed to account for the everyday use of female landscapes […], the social relations that shape that use […], and female perspectives on the use, value and cultural significance of taking part in subsistence activities". Three partially considered who was excluded. Caringi *et al.,* (2013) stated that they utilised consultants to capture youth voices, rather than directly involving youth. Flint *et al.,* (2011: 207) state that they could not engage all members of the community, "especially marginalised members, such as those who are housebound, disabled, or ostracised for various reasons". Rasmus (2014) describes that parents could have been included but were not due to subsistence and employment commitments.

In terms of consistency of participant composition throughout research, sixteen articles described participation in two or fewer phases, so were discounted in analysis of consistency of participation. 71 were retained for further analysis, with 33 attaining a low level of consistency. Five articles had the same participants at each stage of research in which participants were involved.

4.1 Who participated in the research?

Figure 4 shows participant groups across all articles and across all phases of research. Elders were the group that most frequently participated in research, followed by tribal organisations (e.g. tribal governments). Other groups that participated frequently in articles included community leaders and staff, the community, youth and steering committees. Of the 19 articles that involved steering

committees, thirteen did not describe who participants on the steering committee were. Thirteen articles also defined at least one participant as a co-researcher.

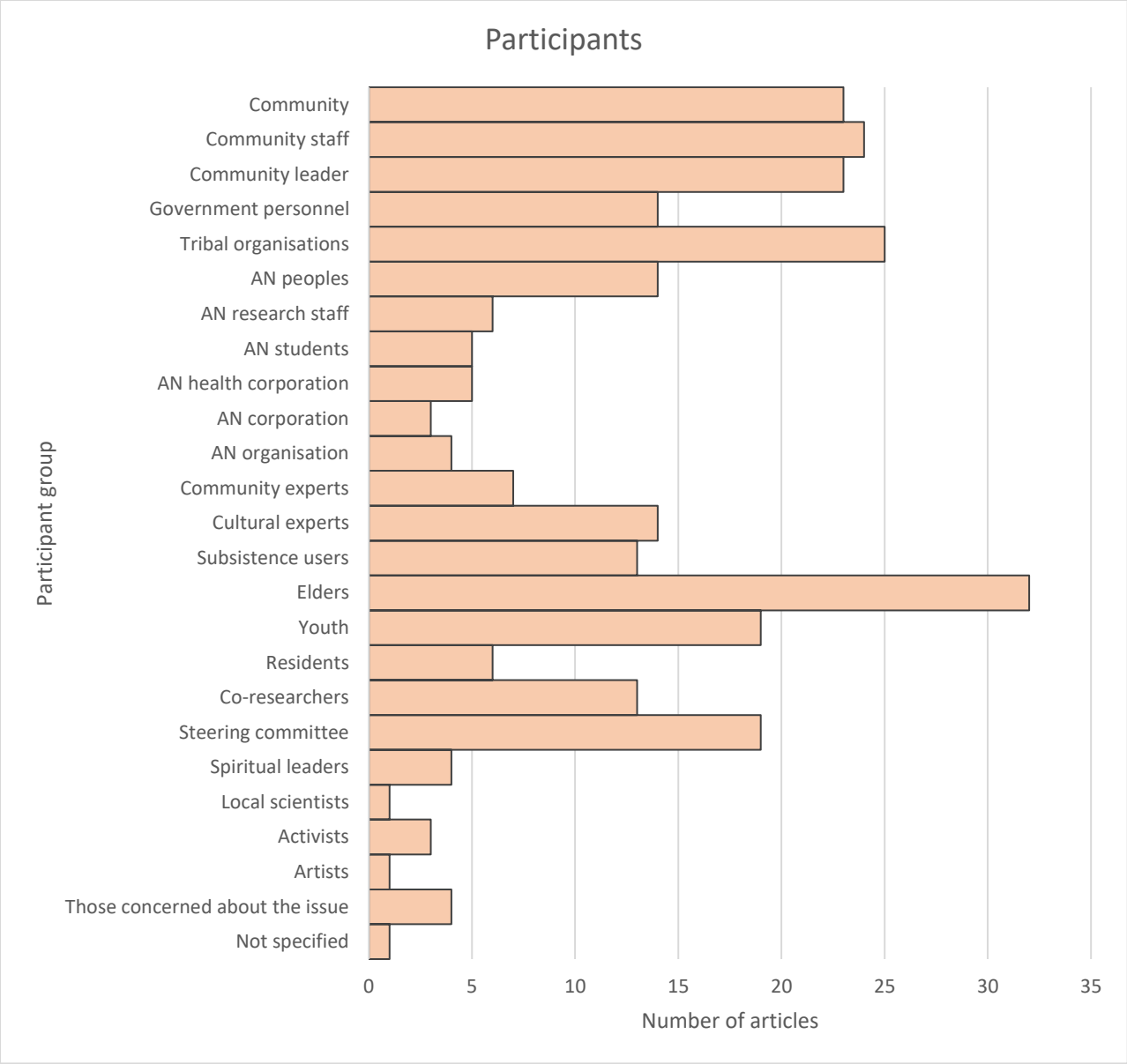
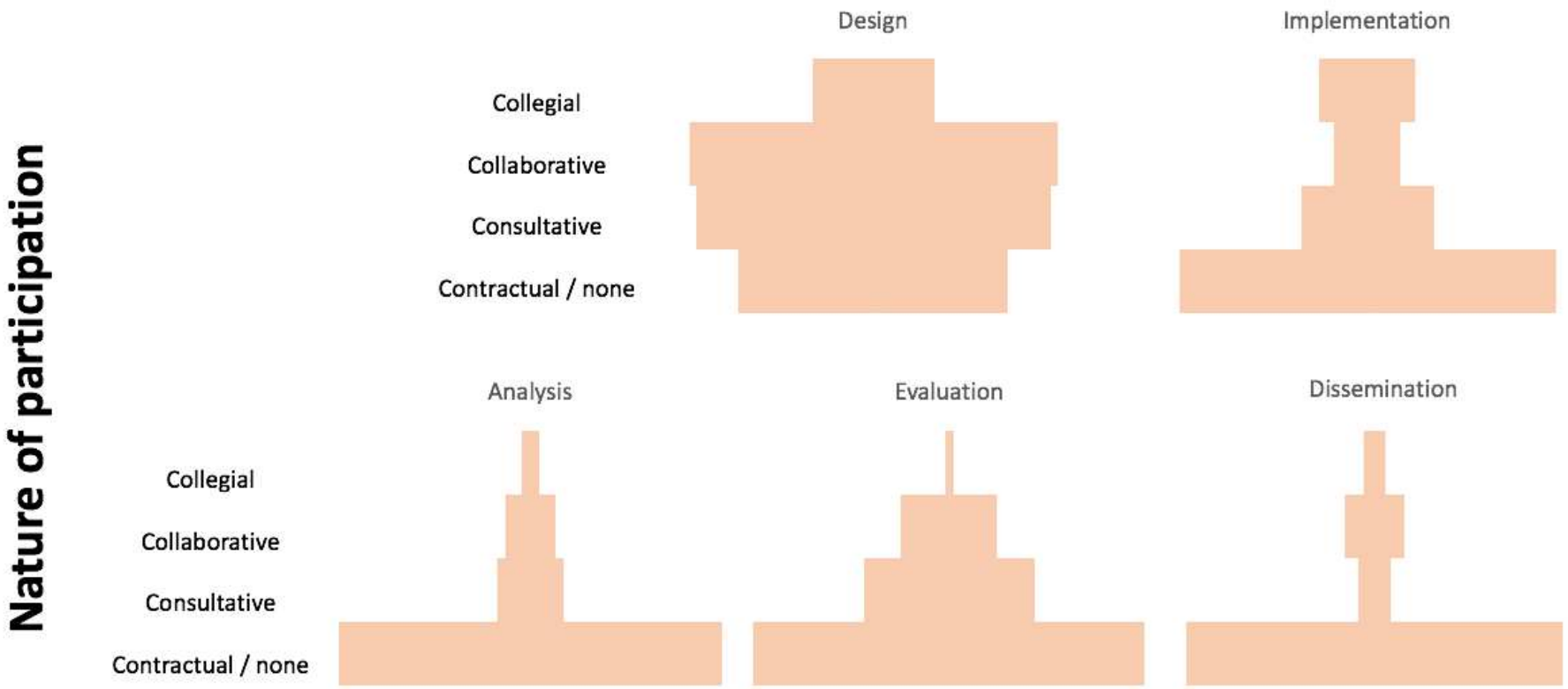


Fig. 4: Participation of groups across articles. Note that studies used multiple groups.

4.2 Nature of participation

Although no article demonstrated Indigenous nature of participation, collegial levels of participation (i.e. where community members had primary authority over the process) were highest in research design (fig. 5). These articles typically responded to research needs identified and requested by the community (e.g. Burger *et al.,* 2009) or collaborated with pre-existing entities working towards the

same goal (e.g. Rasmus *et al.,* 2014). Collegial nature of participation was lower in research implementation. Such articles generally demonstrated how research implementation was conducted by participants in a way that led to benefits beyond just generating data. For example, cultural consultants in Carinigi *et al.,* (2013) conducted healing ceremonies whilst also collecting data. Three articles (Lopez *et al.,* 2012; Mohatt *et al.,* 2008; Sharma *et al.,* 2013) demonstrated collegial nature in data analysis, with co-analysis workshops being held with their AN student participants. Only Berardi and Donnelly (1999) met the criteria for collegial participation in evaluation, and this was through constant evaluation throughout the project to decide whether it should continue. Two articles demonstrated collegial nature of dissemination, for instance through participants providing health education to the wider community, with decision-making power over what resources to use (Lardon *et al.,* 2010).



443

444 Fig. 5: Nature of participation identified across articles for each research stage. Note that no article achieved ‘Indigenous’ nature of participation.

445

4.3 Challenges in community-based and participatory research

Table 4 highlights results from coding of challenges identified in articles. Five overarching themes were identified: institutional constraints, collaboration, community-level challenges, positionality and logistics.

451 Table 4: Challenges identified in articles, grouped by categories and themes.

Theme	Category	Number of articles	Example
Institutional constraints	Tensions between institutions and CBPR principles	11	"[Participant] was drawing critical attention to how university research and funding processes work—and really saying this may not always be best for the participating communities" (Gonzalez and Trickett, 2013:121)
	Funding	17	Lack of control over how to spend budget (Cusack-McVeigh *et al.,* 2016)
	Publishing	3	Reviewers wanted more extensive quotes to be used (Leonard and Gilmore, 1999)
	Lack of understanding of qualitative and participatory methods	4	Funding panels are often made up of positivistic/quantitative paradigms-orientated researchers so the team was advised to include quantitative methods, which set back the team as AN members became concerned that researchers would co-opt the goals of the community (Mohatt *et al.,* 2004)
Collaboration	Disagreements within the collaboration	5	Some items were removed from research due to disagreements (Gonzalez and Trickett, 2013)
Community-level challenges	Cultural acceptability	8	Experience of trauma was dropped from the model due to cultural unacceptability. This meant research questions were determined by cultural acceptability (Allen *et al.,* 2014).
	Distrust of research	5	An Elder discontinued interview and withdrew from the study because they believed that researcher was visiting her to remove her from her family (Lewis, 2014).
	Working around participant schedules	9	Difficulty interviewing those who were employed or engaged in subsistence (Cueva *et al.,* 2018; Ebbesson *et al.,* 2006)
	Lack of engagement	8	Research fatigue (Boyer *et al.,* 2007); key stakeholders not interested (Brown and Donovan, 2013)
Positionality	Positionality	4	Researcher felt uncomfortable representing Yup'ik views as a non-Native (Fienup-Riordan, 1999).
	Inaccessible language	4	Use of jargon created a sense of a hierarchical power differential that makes communities uncomfortable (Mohatt *et al.,* 2004)
Logistics	Logistics	13	Time and multiple visits required to build trust (Eisner *et al.,* 2012; Flint *et al.,* 2011)

452

5.0 Discussion

This study conducted a systematic literature review of community-based and participatory research in Alaska to examine how such research is operationalised. Whilst all articles emphasised the importance of local level engagement in research, there were significant differences in the degree of reporting of both community and participation, thus obfuscating the political nature of such approaches. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that insights derived from this review are subject to the degree of detail and transparency in reporting, and we recognise that articles do not report the full details of the research process. This reliance on the way in which the research process is reported, then, must be regarded as an indicator or proxy of the state of community-based and participatory research in Alaska. For example, different disciplines have different standards over what constitutes good research practice, which is important given the interdisciplinary nature of this review. Participatory approaches and community-based work have their roots in empowerment, feminist and critical studies, yet styles of reporting (e.g. stating positionality, practising reflexivity and thick description) are not standard across disciplines. Similarly, it is not standard practice to report fully on the research process in all disciplines, which was reflected in some articles, which clearly required extensive community engagement, yet did not provide details, resulting in them attaining lower scores (e.g. Sakakibara, 2010). Nevertheless, findings suggest that reporting the research process with greater transparency demonstrates that participation is not tokenistic, and further allows for the complexity of both community and participation to be considered. Here, we discuss the implications of our results, and, given that all but one study focused on AN communities, we further question the use of Western sociological theory in AN contexts.

5.1 Community

There were overall few definitions or considerations for what a community was, with Picou (2000) highlighting the Native Village of Eyak as a symbolic community that is dispersed within and around the town of Cordova. Both Hiratsuka *et al.,* (2012) and Sharma *et al.,* (2013) do not identify their

community under study as place-based, but rather as AN/AI peoples across Alaska who, although diverse, hold some unique, shared characteristics. Nevertheless, no article fully provided a definition for community, and many used the term interchangeably with geographical entities or cultural groups. Whilst research with AN/AI occurs in the context of the history of invasion, thus providing some basis for this being a community in and of itself (based on shared history) (Waterworth *et al.,* 2014), this does not account for the heterogeneity of AN/AI nor social change that has occurred more recently (e.g. Ganapathy, 2011).

Divides across gender were noted by several articles, which ranged from reporting participant demographics and being critical of the lack of representation of women (Brown and Donovan, 2013) through to adjusting data collection (e.g. composition of focus groups) by gender and circumstance to allow for differences to emerge from the data (Sharma *et al.,* 2013). Given evidence of increased gender inequality within AN communities (Shearer, 2012), it is important that this is considered. Issues of gender arose not only in framing of the community under study, but also at later stages of the research. For instance, Ford *et al.,* (2012) noted that different approaches (e.g. group size) were needed when working collaboratively with men and women, and changed their methods accordingly. Furthermore, Natcher (2004) acknowledges that by involving only male hunters, resultant maps created did not include how women value subsistence resources, nor how women use the landscape.

However, gender is only one of many axes across which power operates, and it appears that those pertaining to social status (including how this has changed) were only acknowledged by Lipka (1989). Interestingly, this is also the oldest article in the sample, indicating that no community-based or participatory research in Alaska has made explicit intra-community power structures since 1989. Even when considering elements of the review that did not concern community specifically, only one article (Flint *et al.,* 2011) mentions marginalised peoples, although this is in the context of being unable to access this group, and does not concern who these groups are, why there are marginalised, or how this could influence (or be influenced by) results. Therefore, there is clearly an absence of critical consideration of community, particularly in relation to power structures. This, then, suggests

509 that community-based and participatory research appears to work within existing power structures in
510 Alaska, potentially reproducing underlying inequalities. Whilst this review only assessed projects that
511 were carried out in academic settings, this is in line with findings from other studies in Alaska that
512 evaluate decisions and actions made by various agencies (e.g. Jacobs and Brooks, 2011; Spaeder,
513 2005; Walsey and Brewer, 2018).
514
515 The low consideration for community heterogeneity can be interpreted differently, however, when
516 considering the complexity of researching in Alaska Native contexts (Balestrery, 2011). It is possible
517 that highlighting divides within a community could undermine self-determination, particularly when
518 outside researchers are involved, and when it is considered that a part of self-determination surrounds
519 how Indigenous peoples choose to represent themselves to outsiders (Abolson and Willett, 2004). In
520 line with participatory principles, a high proportion of articles went through community review, so
521 those consulted may not have wanted aspects about their community to be made public, particularly
522 given historically harmful research. This is in line with Alaska Federation of Natives and Alaska
523 Native Science Commission's sovereign scientific research guidelines, which state that AN should be
524 collaborative partners and that decision-making should be founded on consensus (Balestrery, 2011).
525 This is a phenomenon Cleaver (1999: 605) describes as "dangerous", in that the fear by researchers
526 and practitioners in critiquing local practices leads to too much emphasis on local power structures,
527 encouraging elite capture. Thus, there appears to be tension between reporting about communities to
528 the critical level called for in academia, and the guidelines established for research with Indigenous
529 peoples. It is noteworthy that many of the critiques surrounding the concept of community were
530 derived from Western sociological framings, and thus this review represents a Western sociological
531 critique of community. This in turn raises questions surrounding the appropriateness of applying
532 Western constructs of community to AN peoples, as highlighted by Coombes *et al.,* (2012) and Smith
533 (2007). For instance, whilst they acknowledge that discourse around community can protect economic
534 interests of elites, they also warn against always viewing communities as regressive, particularly
535 when outsiders are using the term in ways that mask the dynamism and fluidity of social groups. For
536 example, some Indigenous scholars (e.g. Coombes *et al.,* 2012) call for research into how

communities motivate resistance to neoliberalism, which addresses the importance of exogenous forces on communities, as recently proposed in Western sociological literature (Barrett, 2015). It is neither the purpose nor the place of this paper to make recommendations surrounding AN community structure. Nevertheless, we question the applicability of Western sociological literature around community, as this has not been developed in a colonised context (Abolson and Willett 2004; Go, 2013; hooks 1992). Whilst there is no simple approach that satisfies everyone, we encourage researchers working with communities to carefully consider how they conceptualise communities in their work, looking towards Indigenous scholars (if possible, from the communities they work with), and what the possible implications of this are prior to conducting research.

5.2 Participation

Qualitative research, particularly with hard to reach populations, relies on purposive sampling in which participants are selected based on their ability to speak on behalf of groups (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Whilst this was widespread throughout the review, as demonstrated by reliance on cultural and community consultants, few papers acknowledged the potentially culturally inappropriate nature of this in Alaska (Jacobs and Brooks, 2011). When considering participants in community-based research, researchers are essentially concerned with selecting who is speaking on behalf of a community. For example, reliance on leaders can result in interests of elite being addressed, potentially marginalising those not considered to be the local elite. Notwithstanding that researchers often ask leaders to identify experts (e.g. Henderson *et al.,* 2017), there are issues when using cultural and community consultants, as expertise is defined based on deeply-seated assumptions about the validity of different types of knowledge (Hitomi and Loring, 2018; Nader, 1996; Yeh, 2016). Thus, using ‘consultants’ (e.g. Caringi *et al.,* 2013; Gonzalez and Trickett, 2014) or ‘experts’ (e.g. Allen *et al.,* 2009; Lewis *et al.,* 2014; Wilson, 2014), without detailing how these were chosen can be problematic. Also consistent with critiques of Hitomi and Loring (2018), Elders were the group that were most frequently included articles. Whilst there is no doubt that this group offers important perspectives, overreliance can serve to marginalise some voices. Although Hitomi and Loring (2018)

were concerned with environmental research, this review highlights that Elders are disproportionately consulted across other concerns too, such as health (Allen *et al.,* 2018), education (Hugo *et al.,* 2013), and sociology (Gram-Hanssen, 2018). Several papers did, however, consider this through justifying why their participants were best positioned to participate (e.g. Cueva *et al.,* 2018; Rivkin *et al.,* 2013), and Legaspi and Orr (2007) specifically highlight that cultural consultants do not speak for the entire community. Thus, as with reporting around community, we suggest that authors use thick description in reporting around sampling in community-based and participatory research, with a particular sensitivity to issues of power (including the positionality of the researcher).

5.2.2 Nature of participation

It is pertinent to note that across each stage, articles that transparently exemplified how their practice led to increased participant control over the research scored more highly. For example, Mohatt *et al.,* (2004) demonstrates how decision-making by consensus led to a change in focus from substance abuse to sobriety, whilst Gonzalez and Trickett (2018) describe continuous disagreement within their collaboration surrounding whether questions of trauma should be included. Decisions around what to research are power-laden and often reflect the worldview of researchers (Atleo, 2004), yet Mohatt *et al.,* (2004) and Gonzalez and Trickett (2018) show how involving participants in research design can result in their worldview being reflected. These are in contrast with numerous articles that used vague descriptions of engagement, such as providing guidance. Transparency in reporting of participatory research should be welcomed, as it can provide a way to demonstrate that participation is not tokenistic. This is important in an Alaskan context, as Jacobs and Brooks (2011) and Shearer (2007) have both critiqued how Alaska Native representatives are often asked to attend meetings and concur with agency decisions, rather than being listened to and considered in decision-making.

Overall, research design had most participation compared with other phases. This suggests that, broadly, projects were grounded in local concerns and relevant to the community. This is supported by the fact that articles that demonstrated relevance of the research to the studied community

generally scored highly for participation in research design. This was particularly the case where communities had approached the researchers with an issue (e.g. Burger *et al.,* 2009), where researchers were directed by community members to work with a pre-existing committee addressing a pre-determined area of concern (e.g. Rasmus *et al.,* 2014), and where there was extensive description of how research was adapted to local concerns and contexts (e.g. Burger *et al.,* 2009). Articles where community-based organisations, leaders, steering committees and other groups were able to select participants scored highly (e.g. Henderson *et al.,* 2017). Additionally, where organisations were able to choose their level of involvement, as well as of participating groups (e.g. Lewis *et al.,* 2018) scored highly, as this demonstrated that potential collaborators could engage in research on their own terms in ways that did not impede their ongoing activities. However, if this is done without consideration of who collaborators are this can be problematic, despite this being regarded as best practice in participatory research. This further indicates a tension between critical consideration of community and participation in research, suggesting that the tenets of participatory research may be in conflict with agendas of self-determination (Cargo *et al.,* 2008). Thus, we emphasise that there is no tidy approach to conducting community-based and participatory research. It is an iterative process that requires flexibility and negotiation, in which researchers should be attuned to power dynamics.

When implementing research, the highest scoring articles for participation gave space for participants to engage in culturally relevant practices that provided some benefit to participants beyond aims of the research. For example, in Caringi *et al.,* (2013) cultural consultants conducted healing ceremonies and reported back successes to researchers. This is especially interesting, as it implies that participants could evaluate what determined success on their own terms (Anderson *et al.,* 2012). However, this was also directly critiqued by other articles evaluated. For instance, Lopez *et al.,* (2012) highlighted that AN students perceived such practices as means by which White researchers were trying to make their methods appear more “Native”. Thus, the ways in which such practices are implemented in research warrants careful consideration of individual and collective positionality.

Participation in analysis was low across papers, possibly owing to the complexity of qualitative data analysis, with time and funds needed to train and pay those that analyse data, which was identified as an obstacle to inclusion by Burger *et al.,* (2009). It is thus no surprise that studies engaged in co-analysis worked with those for whom such training would be useful in the future, such as university students (Sharma *et al.,* 2013; Lopez *et al.,* 2012). Analysis is, however, important, as it allows participants to interpret data based on their own worldviews, as well as confronting, modifying and honing researchers' interpretations (Smith, 1994). The purpose of assessing the level and nature of participation in evaluation was intended to ascertain whether and how participants engage in interpretation of research that do not fall neatly into formal data analysis techniques (e.g. coding). Although more articles demonstrated collaborative participation in evaluation, only Berardi and Donnelly (1999) engaged in collegial review through continuous review where the community had the power to terminate the study. Thus, in terms of both formal analysis and less formal involvement in interpretation of findings, there continues to be significant power imbalance. This is particularly concerning given the high number of articles engaging co-researchers, as co-researchers in particular should be (at the very least) engaged in reflexive dialogue during these phases (Finlay, 2002). The low involvement of participants reported in both analysis and evaluation, suggests that this has not been the case in Alaskan community-based and participatory research.

5.2.3 Micropolitics of participation

A fundamental component of qualitative research, in which participatory approaches have their roots, is the recognition that the researcher is a research instrument (Mantzoukas, 2005). Meanings are negotiated between the researcher and the researched in participatory approaches, meaning that different researchers will reveal different stories: they will elicit different responses from participants, they will ask different questions and interpret data differently (Finlay, 2002). Additionally, participatory approaches are concerned with power, which questions not only the privileged position of researchers, but also the micropolitics of collaboration (Ferreyra, 2006). While only 11% considered their positionality in the research (see supplementary materials), there is also uncritical

involvement of collaborators, such as co-researchers, steering committees and community-based organisations.

The highest scoring articles defined who co-researchers were and how they came to be involved in the research. For example, Lopez *et al.,* (2012) describes how a focus group was initially conducted to explain research, with interested students subsequently volunteering to join the team. Similarly, Wexler (2006) describes co-researchers as those who were willing to contend with the paradox of familiarity. Through this, both articles demonstrate the willingness of participants to be involved, with Wexler (2006) additionally considering the complex identity of co-researchers, thus addressing some concerns surrounding the lack of nuance in reporting about co-researchers (Greene *et al.,* 2009). Nevertheless, the majority of articles did not reveal this level of detail about their collaborators. This is concerning, as the use of co-researchers has been widely critiqued in the participatory research literature, for instance, through recognition of shifting identities and elevated positions as participants become co-researchers (Petersen, 2010). Furthermore, through engaging some participants more collaboratively in research, those participants are potentially made more vulnerable (McCartan *et al.,* 2012; Smith *et al.,* 1999). Other articles identified their co-researchers as Indigenous, but did not elaborate on whether they were from the same community (e.g. Mohatt *et al.,* 2004; Weinronk *et al.,* 2017) whilst others made explicit that their co-researchers were not from the community. In these instances, it is pertinent to consider the positionality of the co-researchers in relation to participants, which was not evident here. This harks back to critiques made by Smith (2013), about Indigenous researchers being considered *de facto* the same as Indigenous participants. However, this was not the case across all articles that included AN or AI on the research team, as demonstrated by Carpluk and Leonard (2016), who acknowledge the separate status of AN students and researchers, due to their affiliation with universities. A more transparent account about the commonalities and differences between co-researchers and the community (including how this may have changed as a community member becomes a co-researcher) would elucidate and refine the co-researcher's role more clearly, and allow for further consideration of diversity of experiences and viewpoints within and between certain groups (Chouinard, 2000; Kobayashi, 1994; Valentine, 2003).

Similarly, although steering committees are advocated for when non-Indigenous peoples research in Indigenous contexts (Louis, 2007), there is still a need to consider how the composition of the steering group may influence research. Some projects gave extensive description of those on their steering committees. A notable example is Allen *et al.,* (2013) who, similar to other articles engaged the People Awakening Coordinating Council (PACC) but, unlike other articles, provided description of who made up PACC, including members' roles in grassroots sobriety movements. Mohatt *et al.,* (2008) also used PACC, yet recognised the heterogeneity between representatives of cultural groups on PACC. Other articles demonstrated transparency in how steering committees were created. For example, through indicating that composition of steering committees was decided by local leadership (Henderson *et al.,* 2017). Although this potentially causes problems in terms of elite capture, the transparency with which this is reported at the very least makes this known, as is required in qualitative research (Noble and Smith, 2015). Pertinent to aforementioned critiques of communities is whether it is the same people on steering committees. Whilst this is not something that is clear from the review, the statement by Rivkin *et al.,* (2013) that all participants knew each other, as they had previously worked together, suggests there could be volunteer sector elites, or at least the same few people who represent community issues. This is also corroborated by Jacobs and Brooks (2011) and Spaeder (2005), who highlight similar issues in co-management of natural resources in Alaska. This review, then, suggests that there could be issues of volunteer sector elites beyond co-management, possibly in healthcare research (Rivkin *et al.,* 2013), which could be problematic as volunteer sector elites have been shown to increase health disparities (Paterson, 2010).

Overall, there was little discussion of the micropolitics involved in collaboration, which could understandably be born of the desire to protect collaborators and the collaboration, particularly where research is ongoing. Nevertheless, all participatory and collaborative research require researchers to enter a community at some level, or via a particular person, which is inherently a political process (Smith *et al.,* 2011). Thus, whilst collaboration is fundamental to participatory and community-based research, the micropolitics of collaboration need to be considered more critically (Mauthner and

Doucet, 2008). One way in which this is done in qualitative research is by ensuring there is transparency in collaboration, from research development through to reporting research (Auberbach and Silverstein, 2003; Mauthner and Doucet, 2008). Thick description of this process can also be a means of enhancing validity of collaborative approaches, which was only done by Caringi *et al.,* (2013). Again, there is no tidy approach to addressing these issues in a manner that satisfies all. However, we urge researchers to recognise that research cannot be apolitical, but through careful decision-making and reporting, enough information can be provided to better understand the contested nature of collaboration.

5.3 Critiques of community-based and participatory approaches

Institutional constraints were frequently mentioned in studies in various contexts. Some concerned how activities important for trust-building would not be funded, whilst others highlighted direct conflicts between institutional procedures and participatory principles. For example, Boyer *et al.,* (2007) highlight conflict between how participatory research should be reported back to participants (i.e. results should be reported to those who participated), versus how the National Bioethics Advisory Commission recommends findings should be reported (i.e. only once findings are scientifically valid, and findings have significant implications for subject health and a course of action/treatment is available and appropriate medical advice or referral is provided). This exemplifies how adhering to institutional structures can promote extractive research, cause harm, and foster distrust between researchers and participants, consistent with previous studies that highlight the incompatibility of participatory research with institutional requirements (Ferreyra, 2006).

Nadasdy (2003) and Vaudry (2011) posit that where power is not fully devolved, state power is strengthened, possibly under the guise of decentralisation and empowerment. Recent sudden shifts in the political and economic climate in Alaska, for example, have resulted in deep budget cuts to Alaskan universities (Rosen, 2019), where the majority of articles were completed (see supplementary materials). Thus, even where projects are completed to high standards, their placement within a

politically dominant settler society renders them vulnerable to action by those at higher levels, which ultimately can lead to cessation of projects. Community-based and participatory research in these contexts could be considered neoliberal progressive spaces (Bargh and Otter, 2009), whereby research has accountability to people (community and participants), but also to institutions.

At the local level, cultural acceptability, distrust and lack of engagement were frequently mentioned as challenges. Lack of engagement was linked to research and meeting fatigue (Boyer *et al.,* 2005; Boyer *et al.,* 2007), consistent with previous research within Alaska (Jacobs and Brooks, 2011; Spaeder, 2005) and elsewhere (Clark, 2008; Mandel, 2003). In these contexts, participation in research could be a burden to the community, raising questions about the appropriateness of extensive participation in research, as well as appropriateness of research topic. Interestingly, in their article on substance abuse and suicide, Rasmus (2014) attribute dwindling participation to the community no longer being in crisis. This is, of course, a positive outcome, yet it appears to conflict with academic expectations to complete projects beyond resolving locally-defined problems.

Several articles alluded to power structures in research that hampered collaboration. For example, Mohatt *et al.,* (2004) highlights how the use of jargon alienated participants by creating a sense of hierarchical power. Furthermore, when considering Spaeder (2005) and Walsey and Brewer (2018), where the burden of travelling for meetings in which AN peoples often had to defend local realities to non-Indigenous peoples, whilst acting in culturally appropriate ways and making their knowledge palatable for Western institutions, it was difficult not to be critical of articles that had hosted events in Western institutions in population centres, where AN participants were expected to voice their perspectives. For instance, Driscoll *et al.,* (2016) hosted a colloquium at the University of Alaska Anchorage for community leaders from various Alaskan villages. Although this was not critiqued by the authors, there are questions about the cultural acceptability of formal meetings in Western population centres, particularly given that a key critique of participatory approaches being that, to become empowered, Indigenous peoples must agree to Western norms, such as meetings (Jacobs and Brooks, 2011). Other articles that engaged multiple communities may have overcome this through

760 hosting their meetings in regional hubs that were primarily Alaska Native, such as Nome (Ebbesson *et*
761 *al.,* 2006) and Utqiaġvik (Sigman *et al.,* 2014). We note, however, that this is a generalisation and
762 may not apply to every context, as numerous factors are likely to be considered concerning meeting
763 location.
764
765 **6.0 Conclusion**
766 Systematic reviews of qualitative research are contested, yet they can open up space for new insights
767 and understandings to emerge (Walsh and Downe, 2005). This review has done so by examining
768 usage of participation and community in research across disciplines in Alaska, systematically
769 identifying and assessing how research operationalises these concepts. Findings show that there is
770 overall a lack of consideration of the heterogeneity of 'communities', with little consideration of
771 intra-community power structures that can marginalise some and privilege others. Given recent social
772 change in Alaska, not considering these power structures potentially leads to the replication of
773 unequal power relations in research outcomes, particularly with the drive for community-based and
774 participatory research to produce tangible outcomes that empower participants.
775
776 There was more consideration around participation, with more transparency around how participants
777 participated than around who participants were. In line with best practice in participatory research, co-
778 researchers, steering committees, and tribal governments were extensively involved in the research
779 process. However, these were largely considered uncritically, potentially leading to elite capture or
780 placing co-researchers in vulnerable positions. Nevertheless, the use of co-researchers, community-
781 based organisations, and steering committees is encouraged in Alaska when working with AN
782 peoples.
783
784 Despite AN institutions advocating for community-based and participatory approaches, both
785 participation and community are Western constructs. What is interesting is that for critical
786 consideration of community, in which there is consideration of internal power structures, who
787 participated (and their potential interests), who was excluded and transparency around these can be in

conflict with elements of participatory research on Indigenous terms. For example, review of a study by a steering committee, who could represent the local elite, may result in some elements being omitted that may be sensitive or cast the community in a negative light. Given that participatory approaches are supported by Indigenous institutions (Peterson, 2010), this review raises questions about constructs of community in Indigenous contexts. For example, the applicability of community, as a Western sociological construct transferred to a colonised context, is questioned. Therefore, although this review problematises community and participation, it also raises questions about the appropriateness of Western sociological constructs in AN contexts.

We recognise that this review has problematised community-based and participatory research whilst providing few alternatives. In part, this is intentional, as we recognise that this sort of research requires flexibility. Nevertheless, we conclude that in terms of *reporting* community-based and participatory research, authors could utilise a number of key considerations to avoid their research being tokenistic and/or uncritical:

1. Describing positionality of researcher(s) and how this may influence the research. If a team of researchers is collaborating, both individual and collective positionality should be considered.
2. Describing how researchers approach the concept of community, including some description of who was included and also who was excluded, and how this then relates to the researcher's conceptualisation of community. This could include description of how participants were chosen and what the implications are of this. For instance, if researchers chose participants based on their level of expertise in a certain area, researchers could reflect on what they deem expertise to be and what assumptions they are. In terms of those who are excluded from the research (intentionally or otherwise), authors could give more attention to how the lack of those voices has influenced the research.
3. Thick description of the collaborative process and of the nature of participation. This could include description of the background of collaborators and how they came to be involved in the research, the specific goals of collaborators (and how they aligned and/or differed from those of the researchers), challenges that arose (and their solutions), and any pre-existing

relationships between researchers and collaborators or between collaborators. Specifically where co-researchers are involved, researchers should reflect on the identity of the co-researcher, how this changes through the research process, and how this then influences research.

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